Your 4-H story is an opportunity to reflect on your 4-H experiences during the current 4-H year. As you begin to write your story, take a few minutes to think back to last October when the new 4-H year was waiting to unfold. Today you might be 3 inches taller or maybe you have a new hair style. Did you have any new friends—or did you discover that you really enjoy rockets, cooking, helping people? Have you learned that you love raising rabbits. You have changed and grown this year.

Do you remember how scary it was to give a demonstration in front of your 4-H club? Recall the laughter when your club exchanged funny gifts. Do you think you will ever forget that time you added a tablespoon—rather a teaspoon of salt to the cookies you made? Or how about the first time you gave your sheep a haircut and it turned out almost perfect? Just as you have grown taller this year, think about how 4-H has helped you grow to become a different person. Recall how you really didn’t want to go play bingo with a bunch of old people until you met Emma at the nursing home. Today your friendship with Emma has grown—she’s like a grandma telling funny stories about when she was a 4-Her, too. 4-Hers have memories about fair. They have even more stories to share about their 4-H adventures during the entire 4-H year.

Don’t worry that you must write a perfect 4-H story. All kids are different. 4-H stories will be different, too! This year some 4-Hers will write a story. Other 4-Hers will record verbal story on video. Younger 4-Hers (7-8 year olds) might want to draw pictures to tell their story. What is really important is taking some time to create your very own 4-H story. Not telling your 4-H story cheats you from enjoying the opportunity to feel really proud of everything you have done this year! Sometimes one of the best rewards we receive is hearing that little voice inside of us say “Wow, would look at what I did this year!” That voice helps us forget that we were really scared, sad or embarrassed and reminds us that we should no longer be afraid to try something even harder next time. 4-Hers learn by doing. This is the motto of 4-H members.

4-Hers can write their story using a pencil, ink pen or on the computer. Remember it is your personal 4-H story so use the tool you like the best. As a guide, younger members stories will be shorter than older members. A few sentences can tell the story of a first year member. 4-Hers age nine or ten might fill a page or more. Over time, 4-H stories become longer. Senior member’s 4-H essays could be a 1000 to 2000 words long. For state project awards, a general 4-H story of 5 to 6 pages is suggested. Also, members include a second in-depth project story of several pages in length with their award application.
Some Tips If You Are Struggling To Know How To Begin Your 4-H Story

Sometimes a just having a blank piece of paper or empty computer screen staring at you can be challenging. Try just jotting down a few memories about your 4-H year. Or share about a few of your favorite 4-H club/projects and activities memories out aloud. Ask a family member to jot down notes as you talk. Remember you can make changes later. These tips will help you record a video story, too.

Pick a theme and build the story around that theme so the story flows naturally. If you are having trouble developing a theme, you may use the following questions to help think about what to say. Ask your club leader, older 4-Hers, parents or teachers for tips to help you create your 4-H story. Visit with extension agents for more tips.

Part 1 - About You

- Who are you? Family members/where do you live/what 4-H club do you belong?/Offices/Events attended at club, county, area and state levels
- What might be one of your Sparks: interests or passions?
- What are your plans for the future?

Part 2 – 4-H Projects and Activities

- What goals did you set in your projects and which ones did you reach?
- What would you do differently if you were to try it again?
- What skills have you learned in 4-H?
- How have you handled financing your projects, if needed?
- Who was especially helpful to you? How?
- Did you give presentations/performances to any groups?

Part 3 – Leadership and Citizenship

- How has 4-H helped you become a better leader and citizen?
- What types of citizenship projects or leadership roles have you been involved in?
- How did you work with others to help/contribute to your community or your school?
- What have you learned from working with other 4-H’ers through your leadership positions?

Part 4 – 4-H’s Impact on You

- What kinds of relationships have you had with your 4-H leaders? 4-H buddies/Other members?
- How has your 4-H participation changed how you feel about yourself?
- How has your participation influenced your school and career goals?
- What has being a 4-H member meant to you?
- How has 4-H helped you identify your Sparks: interests or passions?

Using Flipgrid To Tell Your 4-H Story

A new Flipgrid has been created as an optional tool for Atchison County 4-Hers to create their 4-H story. 4-Hers will see a few story tips suggestions to guide them. The Flipgrid also has story examples plus other tips attached. You can upload your fair video and then edit to add more information. Flipgrid has a 10 minute recording time limit. Other 4-H records such as personal pages and project records can be attached to the Flipgrid. A new feature allows the capability to directly record information on your screen. To view this app, use the Flipgrid.com join code: atcorecords. Your password will be included in a family e-mail. If you have questions, don’t hesitate to contact extension agents at 913-833-5450 or e-mail: atchisoncoext@ksu.edu.

Atchison County Story Features

Local 4-Hers have several records options. They can use standard Kansas 4-H forms. Also, they can complete Atchison County specific records. If they choose, the local beginner record is designed to allow 4-Hers to draw their 4-H story. Meanwhile, the local junior project record offers a simplified format that includes questions that prompt 4-Hers to create a 4-H story. 4-Hers desiring to compete for 4-H project awards at the area and state levels should select Kansas records forms as noted on the Extension 4-H recordkeeping web page. https://www.atchison.k-state.edu/4-h/projects/recordkeeping/index.html